

## DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

The overall objectives of the U.S. assistance program in Romania are to support:  
economic freedom and growth;  
democratic attitudes and institutions;  
and  
improvements in Romanian quality of life.

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Activity Title: Opening Politics By Acting Locally (OPAL)  
Implementation Timeframe: May 2002 – March 2008

Objective: To engage civil society organizations (CSOs) and local political parties in activities that will increase political participation and promote the reform of political processes, and to professionalize parliamentary practices through strengthening parliamentary representation, accountability and linkages to the public.

Description: America's two major political party institutes, the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), implement similar programs in different parts of Romania while collaborating on political reform efforts at the central level which will encourage greater local input. Through the OPAL program, IRI and NDI work with CSOs and local branches of the major, democratic political parties to help them engage in activities that increase citizen participation in community life. OPAL promotes participatory decision-making and more issue-based, demand driven political processes. Through training and consultations provided to local political party branches, IRI and NDI help party branches expand community outreach and reduce dependence on central party structures in order to become more internally democratic and responsive to community needs. Through training provided to CSOs, the institutes encourage greater political involvement and interest articulation. Through all its activities, OPAL will also help citizen use more effectively the new freedom of information law. IRI and NDI also provide support to the Romanian Parliament by helping to improve constituency services, monitoring the performance of Parliamentarians, working with committee members on public hearings and increasing public participation in legislative processes and providing direct training to a wide range of members on issues related to representation.

Implementing Partners: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and International Republican Institute (IRI)  
Website: <http://www.ndi.org> and <http://www.iri.org>

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Activity Title: Local Government Reform Program  
Implementation Timeframe: October 2005 – March 2008

Objective: To promote decentralization and to enhance the fiscal and administrative autonomy of local governments in Romania.

Description: This assistance program will promote local government reforms by: refining the key legislation that affects the organization and functioning of local governments; developing good governance models in some municipalities; and strengthening the institutional capacity of select local government associations.

Implementing Partner: Planning and Development Collaborative International (PADCO)

Website: <http://www.padco.aecom.com/>

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Activity Title: Rule of Law Program

Implementation Timeframe: June 2005 – November 2006

Objective: To build sustainable partnerships that contribute to sustained democratic and transparent legal systems and institutions promoting the rule of law.

Description: The purpose of the program is two-fold: 1) increase the independence and integrity of the Romanian judiciary; and 2) increase the attention of the Romanian judiciary to domestic violence issues. Through the Rule of Law program, ABA/CEELI works with the Superior Council of Magistrates, the Ministry of Justice, and Romanian nongovernmental organizations to: establish mechanisms for the implementation of judicial reform legislation; reform judicial performance and evaluation standards; increase the transparency and objectivity of the judicial evaluation process; improve the legislation addressing domestic violence and victims assistance; identify legal as well as practical issues judges must take into consideration when dealing with domestic violence cases; and create and test a pilot training module for judges specialized in criminal cases and family/juvenile panels.

Implementing Partner: American Bar Association, Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI)

Website: <http://www.abanet.org/ceeli/countries/romania/home.html>

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Activity Title: East and Central European Scholarship Program (ECESP)

Implementation Timeframe: October 2003 – October 2006

Objective: To provide medium and long term academic, post-university U.S.-based training, in order to enhance young executives and the ability of public officials to support Romania's transition to a democratic market economy.

Description: Organizes training courses at seven U.S. universities for Romanian decision-makers, that can impact on the overall reform process implemented in Romania. Participants gain knowledge and skills to improve business environment, public administration policies and legislation, education system and political practice.

Implementing Partner: Georgetown University, program funded by USAID/ Regional Bureau  
Website: <http://www.georgetown.edu>

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Activity Title: Promoting Ethics, Integrity, and Reconciliation by the Use of Mass Media under the Incorporating Values Program

Implementation Timeframe: March, 2004 – February, 2006

Objective: To promote ethics, integrity, and tolerance among the young through mass media

Description: Three series of educational video programs for youth will be produced: Building the character of the young generation; Ethics in business and civil society; and Dialogue in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious environment. They are intended to promote values and positive behaviors, and will be disseminated through local and national TV stations. They can also be used as resource and support materials for educational activities in schools, youth meetings, etc.

Implementing Partner: Alfa Omega Foundation

updated October 25, 2005